

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Initially, Applicants note that the Examiner has indicated receipt of the certified copy of the priority document on the Office Action Summary page. However, the Examiner, in paragraph 4 of the "Detailed Action," reminds Applicants that in order to obtain the benefit of priority from Japanese Application No. 2002-305832, a certified copy of this priority document must be submitted. Applicants previously submitted a certified copy of priority document number JP 2002-305832 on January 8, 2004, and notes that PAIR also shows receipt of this document on that date.

To place the application in better form, Applicants submit herewith a substitute specification, which includes a new abstract. For the Examiner's convenience, also provided is a marked-up copy of the original specification showing the portions thereof which are being changed. The substitute specification includes the same changes as are indicated in the marked-up copy. Applicants' undersigned attorney has reviewed the substitute specification and submits that the substitute specification contains no new matter.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 11-17 and 19 are presented for consideration. Claims 1 and 17 are independent. Claim 6 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3, 16 and 17 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention. Support for these changes can be found in the original application, as filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 1-6, 11, 16, 17 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,026, 156 to Epler et al. Claims 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Epler et al. patent in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0250530 to Tanaka. Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Epler et al. patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,243,682 to Eghtesadi et al. Applicants submit that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest features of the present invention, as previously recited in these claims. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 17, for example, as presented, amplify the distinctions between the present invention and the cited art.

In one aspect of the present invention, independent claim 1 recites an information processing apparatus including a manipulation procedure database in which manipulation procedures selectable by a user are described hierarchically, a voice output unit which outputs candidates as voice information regarding the manipulation procedures one at a time, a determination unit which determines a designation of the user, in which when the user designates a selection between the start of voice information output of one manipulation procedure, and the start of the voice information output of a subsequent manipulation procedure, the determination unit determines that the one manipulation procedure is selected by the user, and a control unit, which, if a manipulation procedure contained in a lower hierarchy than a present hierarchy containing the determined manipulation procedure exists, controls the voice output unit to output voice information regarding the manipulation procedure contained in the lower hierarchy lower than the present hierarchy, and which, if a manipulation procedure contained in a lower hierarchy than the present hierarchy does not exist, controls the voice output unit to output voice

information regarding a manipulation procedure contained in a top hierarchy different from a top hierarchy of the present hierarchy.

In another aspect of the present invention, independent claim 17 recites a method of controlling an information processing apparatus, which includes a manipulation procedure database in which manipulation procedures selectable by a user are described hierarchically, and a voice output unit outputs candidates as voice information regarding the manipulation procedures one at a time. The method includes the steps of determining a designation of the user, wherein, when the user designates a selection between the start of voice information output of one manipulation procedure, and the start of the voice information output of a subsequent manipulation procedure, the determining step determines that the one manipulation procedure is selected by the user, controlling, if a manipulation procedure contained in a lower hierarchy than a present hierarchy containing the determined manipulation procedure exists, the voice output unit to output voice information regarding the manipulation procedure contained in the lower hierarchy, and controlling, if a manipulation procedure contained in a lower hierarchy than the present hierarchy containing the determined manipulation procedure does not exist, the voice output unit to output voice information regarding a manipulation procedure contained in a top hierarchy different from a top hierarchy of the present hierarchy.

By such an arrangement, the present invention provides an information processing apparatus and method that enable a user to designate one of selected manipulation procedures in a simple/easy operation. Thus, the present invention provides the ability such that when a user designates a selection between the start of voice information output of one manipulation procedure, and the start of voice information output of a subsequent manipulation procedure, a determination can be made that the one manipulation procedure is selected by the user.

For example, as discussed on pages 29 and 30 of the subject specification, the voice output unit can be started with outputs of voice information of “automatic”, “A4”, “A4R”, and “A3” regarding manipulation procedures contained in a hierarchy relating to sheet selection, and, if the user designates a selection between the start of the voice information output of “A4” and the start of the voice information output of “A4R”, a determination can be made that “A4” is selected by the user.

Applicants submit that the cited art does not teach or suggest such features of Applicants’ present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17.

The Epler et al. patent relates to a method of and an apparatus for providing telecommunication services to a user, such as enhanced call waiting. That patent may disclose an information processing apparatus that comprises a voice output unit which outputs voice information regarding manipulation procedures selectable by a user, and a determination which determines a designation of the user. Applicants submit, however, that the Epler et al. patent does not teach or suggest salient features of Applicants’ present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17 of, for example, determining a designation of a user, wherein, when the user designates a selection between a start of voice information output of one manipulation procedure, and after the start of the voice information output of a subsequent manipulation procedure, the determination can be made that the one manipulation procedure is selected by the user. Applicants submit, therefore, that the Epler et al. patent should not be read to anticipate or render obvious Applicants’ present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17.

Applicants further submit that the remaining art cited fails to cure the deficiencies noted above with respect to the Epler et al. patent.

The Tanaka publication relates to a high rate character input unit of a portable telephone, which comprises a plurality of buttons associated with different instructions, respectively, and a detection unit which detects which of the plurality of buttons is depressed by a user.

The Eghtesadi et al. patent relates to a universal access photocopier which includes an information processing apparatus as a copying machine.

Applicants submit, however, that neither the Tanaka publication nor the Eghtesadi et al. patent teaches or suggests the determination operation of Applicants' present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17. Applicants submit, therefore, that those citations add nothing to the teachings of the of the Epler et al. patent that would render obvious Applicants' present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17.


For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 17, is patentably defined over the cited art, whether that art is taken individually or in combination.

Dependent claims 3, 4, 11-16 and 19 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Further individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Applicants request favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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